purchase 10,000 tonnes of rubber on ruling market prices to check a further crash in prices; and

(b) if so, the details and the quantity purchase so far since then and at what prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government had ordered intervention by STC on Govt, account and directed procurement of quantity up to 10,000 MT, at current prevailing prices, however, not exceeding Rs. *42/-*per kg. STC has been undertaking this procurement along with Kerala State Co-operative Rubber Marketing Federation (Rubbermark) which has been functioning as a local agent for STC for the purpose. As on 17.11.97, against purchase authorisation of 9256 MT, Rubbermark as delivered a quantity of 1193 MT. The average purchase price of quantity so far delivered comes to about Rs. 38.40 per kg.

Decline in Rice-Export

651. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 26th October, 1997 captioned "Devaluation of Pak, ASEAN currencies hit-rice exports" of India;

(b) if so, what major hurdles Indian Exporters are likely to face when Indian rice exports have already registered a 20 per cent decline between April and July this year as compared to that in previous year in the world market; and

(c) the figures of Indian exports of rice, soyabean products and Oil extraction to ASEAN and European countries during 1996-97 and 1997-98 till date and steps taken to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It is not possible to accurately assess the hurdles Indian exporters are likely to face in overseas markets as exports of rice would depend upon international demand and supply position, consumer preferences and prices of substitute goods. However, Indian rice exporters are likely to face stiffer price competition.

(c) The exports of rice, soyabean products and oil extractions to ASEAN and European Union countries during 1996-97 and 1997-98 are as follows:—

ASEAN Countries:

Quantity: MTs.
Value: Rs. in lakhs

	1996-97		1997-98 (April—August, Quantity '97)*	
	Quantity	Value		Value
Rice	12430	1266.40	7787	1050.44
Soyabean products (exlcuding soya extaction)	1	0.65	15	2.44
Oil Extraction (including Soyabean Extactions)	1954198	168208.40	398467	34936.28

European Union Countries:

Quantity: MTs.
Value: Rs. in lakhs

	1996-97		1997-98 (April—August, '97)'	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Rice	61464	14360.92	44227	10838.27
Soyabean products (cxlcuding soya cxiaction)	0.5	0.11	----	5346.25
Oil Extraction (including Soyabean Extactions)	471013	2843721	125200	

*Provisional.

SOURCE: DGCI&S, CALCUTTA

Country-wise details of exports are given in the monthly bulletin/annual numbers of Foreign Trade Statistics of India published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Calcutta, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library.

Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of agricultural products include participation in international trade fairs; arranging buyer-seller meets; conducting market development campaigns; and providing assistance for product development.

Impact on Country's Exports following appreciation in Rupee value

652. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the cumulative percentage of appreciation of rupee value since 1993;

(b) what is the overall impact on the country's exports with the gradual appreciation in rupee value stating the annual decline in the exports in foreign exchange;

(c) what is the targeted growth in the country's export during 1997-98; and

(d) in what way Governmetn think that the targeted growth of exports for 1997-98 would be achieved taking in view the exports performace so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Indian Rupee depreciation in nominal terms by 14.7% against US Dollar in October 1997 compared with January, 1993.

(b) Exchange rate is one among many factors which affects exports and it is difficult to quantify the individual impact of any one factor. Exports have so far not registered any decline, during the last five years in value-terms, only the export growth rate have dccclarated during 1996-97 and 1997-98 (April—September) when cxpots grew by 4.1% and 4.2 respectively.

(c) and (d) A target growth of 18% in US$ terms has been envisaged for exports during 1997-98. Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through policy and promotional schemes. A number of measures have been taken by the Government recently including decisions on trade matters and inter-ministerial policy issues pursuant to Prime Minister's Meeting in June 1997 and in the newly created Export Promotion Board.

Trade with Pakistan through Wagha and Atari Border

653. SHRI KRISHAN KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Government propose to expand trade with Pakistan by